

enough as late as 1839, an American ship, coming from the Sandwich Islands killed 300 sea otter on Cedros Island in Lower California in a few weeks. These pelts are no longer exported to China, where the price has declined to 40 or 45 piasters, because of the abundant supply furnished by the Aleutian Islands and the superiority of the northern skins over those from the south. The hides of freshwater otter are not in demand, and have a value of not more than 2 or 3 piasters.

San Clemente Island is the home of innumerable wild goats of extraordinary size whose skins are worth one-fourth of a piaster. The skins of the hair seal have a value of 6 reals, and those of the fur seal from 3 to 4 piasters. At London the latter command from 25 to 30 shillings.

The handsome appearance and black color that characterize bear skins found in Russian America are lacking in California. Other fur-bearing animals, which will probably be exploited when a large white population inhabits this province, are found in California. Fox, American tiger, wildcat, ground squirrel—the small gray type—mountain sheep, badger, rabbit, and hare, will undoubtedly be included among pelts exported.

Next to hides, the most valuable local commodity is tallow. Beef tallow sells for 4 silver piasters a quintal, or 6 piasters if exchanged for merchandise; that of deer commands several reals more. The hard and brittle character of the latter product does not permit it to be used alone; but when mixed with beef tallow, superfine candles can be made. All tallow is exported directly to Lima where it is used for lighting purposes and for machinery at the mines. Stripped of its hide, a fine steer which costs 7 piasters on the hoof, yields 3 quintals of fat and tallow, and from 200 to 250 kilograms of good meat. Since there is no demand for the horns of deer or steer, they have no market value.

The deer common to California is about the height of a large race-horse; the meat is excellent and supplies two quintals of tallow. Deer horns are often two meters high with an equal amount of spread. These animals are found mainly north of San Francisco in herds of 700 or 800; and as they always run with the wind, they are easily killed after the herd has been scattered. The rancheros hunt them in groups of eight or ten, using their best horses and armed with the lasso. They attempt first to break up the herd and then scatter them, in order to follow an isolated deer which, after being caught by the noose, is surrounded by a circle of men and pulled down. One of the hunters then dismounts, cautiously approaches the animal, and with his knife cuts his hamstring,